

A SHAKESPEARIAN FANTASIA.

IN TWO PARTS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

HENRY V.	CLEOPATRA.
KING LEAR.	KATHARINE THE SHREW.
MACBETH.	JULIET.
TIMON OF ATHENS.	DESDEMONA.
SHYLOCK.	ROSALIND.
FALSTAFF.	MRS. ANNE PAGE.
ROMEO.	MISTRESS FORD.
OTHELLO.	WITCH (FROM MACBETH).
HAMLET.	
ORLANDO.	
JULIUS CÆSAR.	
GHOST.	

ARGUMENT.

The Merchant of Venice and Falstaff met,
On a rainy Twelfth Night, they all got wet;
The Tempest filled them with grief and fear,
They hurried for shelter to see King Lear.
"Much Ado About Nothing," the monarch said;
"My prophetic soul! My uncle is dead;
He expired one night with a deafening scream,
After having a Midsummer Night's bad Dream!"
"All's Well That Ends Well," old Shylock said,
As he fixed Henry Bolingbroke's crown on his head.
"My horse for a kingdom—the witches are here!"
And Orlando and Rosalind trembled for fear.
"Is that a dagger?" Othello cried,
As he snatched the weapon from Romeo's side.
Juliet interposed, and alas! was slain,
Killed by mistake for Hamlet, the Dane.
Cleopatra now forward stept,
To where poor Timon of Athens wept;
In the next room was a sight to view—
Julius Cæsar Taming the Shrew.
Macbeth appeared with Banquo's Ghost,
Merry Wives of Windsor appeared in a host,
And all together round Falstaff pres't.
Making him sport for gibe and jest!

* * * * *
For us and for our tragedy,
Here stooping for your clemency,
We beg your hearing patiently.

PART I.

Exterior of Lear's House.

Enter SHYLOCK and FALSTAFF.

Shy. My daughter, my ducats; fled with a Christian! Oh my Christian ducats—Justice! the law! my ducats and my daughter! A sealed bag! two sealed bags of ducats, of double ducats stolen from me by my daughter—

Fal. I am in the waist two yards about; but now I am about no waste, I am about thrift.

Shy. How like a fawning publican he looks!

Fal. I will not lend you a penny. Wilt thou, after the expense of so much money, be now a gainer?

Shy. I will have nothing but the principal—a pound of flesh to be by me cut off nearest his heart.

Fal. Master, I will first make bold with your money; next, give me your hand—and last. I am a gentleman! (*Thunder.*) 'Tis Twelfth Night, and I am very wet! (*Thunder.*)

Shy. This Tempest fills me with grief and fear!
Let us try for shelter with King Lear.

(*Knock at door of Lear's house.*)

Enter KING LEAR suddenly, followed slowly by HENRY V.

K. Lear. Blow winds and crack your cheeks!
You hurricanes and cataracts spout! till you
Have drenched our steeples, drowned the cocks!
But all this is much ado about nothing—
Shylock, my prophetic soul, my uncle is dead.
He expired one night with a deafening scream,
After having a midsummer night's bad dream.

Then he got up, and called for a dish of lampreys, and eat them
with much enjoyment—a dish of which he was very fond.

Shy. All's well that ends well! Hast thou found my daughter?

Lear. Oh Shylock! sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child.

Henry V. This is an erroneous comedy.

Shy. No matter! the villany you teach me I will execute.

Lear. I am not mad, I say; I am not mad; I am a man more sinned against than sinning; I am not mad! (*Runs about screaming this.*)

Henry (seizing him by the arm). The witches are here! (*LEAR retires in terror.*) Oh that I had here but one ten thousand of those men in England that do no work to-day. (*Blue fire.*)

Enter WITCH; exeunt HENRY, SHYLOCK, and FALSTAFF.

Witch.

A SONG OF SLOYD.

"Round about the caldron go,
In the size as powder throw,
Brush—as hard as heart of stone
Has grown in seven long days gone.
Double, double, toil and trouble;
Paper fold and binding double.

"Fillet of a paper snake,
Slope this corner quick to make;
Dot of pencil, rule of thumb,
Leipsic board, oh hither come!
Steely angle, sharpened knife,
Come and join the fearful strife!
For this charm of powerful trouble
Paper fold, and binding double!"

Click of scissors, fold of cloth,
"Water hot!" to help the broth!
Folder bone, and compass cruel,
Add them to the gruesome gruel!
Froth the brush and spread the paper,
Groan and gurgle—dance and caper!
Trembling hand of frightened shaper—
Mangled model! Tortured frame!
Put them in the Press again!
Squeeze therein their life-blood forth
Add it to the boiling broth!
Double, double, toil and trouble,
Paper fold, and binding double.

* * * *

"Drawing paper, rulèd lines,
Blotting paper spread betimes;
Ink pots filled, and sharpened wits,
Nerves all shattered into fits!
Carefully emotions dam
O'er the working diagram.
Rapidly the board indent
With your murderous implement.
Double anguish, double trouble
Paper fold and binding double.

"Models range on tables neat
Labelled, polished, clean and sweet:
See that twenty there be seen,
If not, turn an envious green!
Touch them up and spread them out—
Passed—or failed? Success—or rout?
Put them in the bottom drawer,
Never to be looked at more!
Double, double, goodbye struggle,
Sloyd is done, there's no more trouble."

—*R. Amy Pennethorne.*

LEAR remains on stage watching WITCH, and running backwards when she dances. Before last verse enter ROSALIND and ORLANDO, remain at back frightened. After last verse exit WITCH with blue fire. ROSALIND and ORLANDO advance.

Orla. Then love me, Rosalind.

Rosa. Yes, faith will I. Fridays, Saturdays, and all.

Orla. And wilt thou have me?

Rosa. Aye, and twenty such.

Orla. What sayest thou?

Rosa. Are you not good?

Orla. I hope so!

Rosa. Why then, can one desire too much of a good thing? Come, King Lear, you shall be the priest and marry us. Give me your hand, Orlando. What do you say, King Lear?

Orla. I pray you, marry us.

K. Lear. But I do not know the words.

Rosa. You must say, "Wilt thou, Orlando, have to wife this Rosalind?"

K. Lear. Go to, go to. Wilt thou, Rosalind, wilt thou, Orlando, have this Rosalind to wife?

Orla. I will.

Rosa. Aye, but when?

Orla. Why now, as fast as he can marry us.

Rosa. Then you must say, "I take thee, Rosalind, for wife."

Orla. I take thee, Rosalind, for wife.

Rosa. I might ask you for your commission, but I do take you. But I will be more jealous of you than a Barbary cock pigeon over his mate, more clamorous than a parrot against rain, more new-fangled than a monkey, more giddy in my desires than an ape. I will weep for nothing like Diana in a fountain, and that when you are disposed to be merry; I will laugh like a hyena, and I will do that when thou art disposed to sleep!

Orla. A man with such a wife, with such a wit might well say, "Wit, whither wilt?" And now for these two hours I must leave you; I must attend the Duke at dinner.

Rosa. Aye, go your ways; I knew how it would be; my friends told me so.

Orla. In two hours I will be with you again.

Kisses her hand.

[Exit.

Enter OTHELLO, followed by DESDEMONA.

ROSALIND takes KING LEAR'S arm.

Oth. (to R.) Hast thou not sometime seen a handkerchief spotted with strawberries? *[Exit ROSALIND and KING LEAR.*

Well, Desdemona, my good lady, how do you do?

Des. Well, my good lord?

Oth. (coughs) I have a salt and sorry rheum affects me; lend me thy handkerchief.

Des. Here it is.

Oth. Not that, the one I gave you—

Des. I have it not about me.

Oth. Not?

Des. No, my good lord.

Oth. That handkerchief did an Egyptian to my mother give; she was a charmer, and could almost read the thoughts of people. To lose it, or give it away, were such perdition, as nothing else could match.

Des. Is't possible?

Oth. Aye. There's magic in the web of it. Speak! Is it gone? Is't out of the way?

Des. I pray you, let Hamlet be called.

Oth. The handkerchief!

Des. I pray you, my lord, change your thoughts.

Oth. That handkerchief!

Des. I'll sing to him. *Sings "A POOR SOUL SAT SIGHING." At last couplet enter ROMEO and JULIET. OTHELLO draws to Right.*

[Exit DESDEMONA.

Jul. It was the nightingale and not the lark, that pierced the fearful hollow of thine ear. Believe me, love, it was the nightingale.

Rom. It was the lark, the herald of the morn. Lady, by yonder moon I swear—

Jul. Swear not by the moon, the inconstant moon—

Rom. What shall I swear by?

Jul. Do not swear at all; or, if thou wilt, swear by my gracious self, that is the goddess of thine idolatry, and I'll believe thee.

Rom. (On his knees.) Oh, speak again, bright angel!

Jul. Oh, Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?

Rom. Look how she leans, cheek upon her hand; oh, that I were a glove upon that hand, that I might touch that cheek.

(Skull is rolled in between them from back.)

Jul. Hist, Romeo, hist. What noise comes there?

(Enter HAMLET and DESDEMONA, arm in arm. OTHELLO seizes and drags her Left. ROMEO and JULIET retreat Right.)

Ham. (C.) Frailty! Thy name is woman! Oh, that this too, too, solid flesh would melt! To be, or not to be, that is the question. Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune *(waving his arms)* or, by opposing, end them! To die—to sleep, no more—and by a sleep to say we end the heartache and the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to. 'Tis a consummation devoutly to be wished. *(Picks up skull.)* Whose skull is this? Alas, poor Yorick! *(To ROMEO, whom he draws L. C.)* I knew him, Horatio, a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy; he has borne me on his back I know not how oft, and now how abhorred in my imagination it is! Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now, your gambols, your flashes of merriment that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one left to mock your own grinning. He was a man, take him for all in all; I shall not look upon his like again. *(To JULIET, fiercely.)* Get thee to a nunnery! *(To DESDEMONA, on his knees.)* Nymph, in thy orisons, be all my sins remembered. *(ROMEO dashes across, stopped by OTHELLO, who snatches dagger from him to stab HAMLET. JULIET intercepts dagger and falls, caught by ROMEO.)*

Oth. Is this a dagger? . . . Oh, Juliet, dead, dead, dead. *(Weeps. Catches sight of HAMLET, who is dancing round. Chases him off L. Curtain.)*

PART II.

TIMON of ATHENS discovered sitting at a small table with two bowls of hot water on it. Enter to him CLEOPATRA.

Timon. Heigho! what a show of vanity comes here!

Cleop. Most honoured Timon! It hath pleased the gods to remember my Antony, and call him to long peace.

Timon (*pointing to chair R.*). Pray sit. More welcome are you to my hot water than my hot water to me.

Cleop. Speak to me of home, mince not the general tongue. Name Cleopatra as she is called in Rome.

Timon. Oh, yes, my good friend, but the gods have provided that I shall have great help from you. What think you? We have any need of friends? I' faith, to warm our hearts. My friends are false, and I am smitten o' Egypt, with all the plagues of Egypt. A plague on both our houses! My town is smitten with plagues incident to our impotent and infectious fevers. Therefore I drink hot water for my sins. Uncover, dog, and lap! Drink, puppy, drink!

Cleop. I would I had thy inches, thou should'st know there was a heart in Egypt that would move the very plates to rise and mutiny! Thou art indeed an oddity, but since Antony is dead there is nothing left remarkable beneath the visiting moon.

Timon. This woman's a flatterer! May you a better feast never behold than smoke and lukewarm water. Henceforth be no feast whereat a villain's not a welcome guest.

Cleop. (*showing snake.*) Dost thou see this pretty worm which kills and pains not?

Timon. Will it eat me?

Cleop. I see him rouse himself to praise my noble action. Antony did tell me of you, bade me trust you! Sir, I'll not eat, I'll not drink, I'll not sleep neither; If idle talk shall once be necessary— This mortal house I'll ruin, do Cæsar what he will.

Timon. Then death indeed may boast that he hath ta'en a lass unparalleled.

Cleop. Come hither, death, and welcome. Come, and take a queen worth many babes and beggars. Poor venomous fool, be angry and dispatch. Antony, I come. (*Enter JULIUS CÆSAR and KATHARINE. JULIUS CÆSAR taps TIMON on shoulder.*)

Timon. And grant as Timon grows his hate may grow, For the whole human race both high and low. I never loved a dear gazelle but it was sure to die. I can't die yet, I have not written my epitaph, and nothing in my life shall become me like the ending of it. I am dying—Egypt—dying.

Exit TIMON and CLEOPATRA arm in arm.

Julius. Yon Katharine has a lean and hungry look; she thinks too much; women are dangerous. Would she were fatter. But I fear her not; yet if my name were liable to fear, I do not know the woman I should avoid so soon as that spare Katharine.

Kath. I' faith, sir, you shall never need to fear, I wis it is not half way to her heart. But if it were, doubt not her care should be to comb your noddle with a three-legged stool, and paint your face, and use you like a fool.

Julius. I'd rather tell you what it is to be feared than what I fear. For always I am Cæsar. Come on my right hand, for this ear is deaf, and tell me truly what thou think'st of her.

Kath. Go, get thee gone, thou false deluding slave, that feeds me with the very name of meat. Sorrow on thee and all the pack of you. Go, get thee gone, I say!

Cæs. Cæsar shall forth—the things that threatened me ne'er looked but on my back—when they shall see the face of Cæsar they are vanished.

Kath. Why, sir, I trust I may have leave to speak, and speak I will. I am no child, no babe. Your betters have endured me say my mind, and if you cannot, best you stop your ears.

Cæs. The gods do this in shame of cowardice. Cæsar would be a beast without a heart if he this day endures a woman's tongue. No, Cæsar shall not. Danger knows full well that Cæsar is more dangerous than he; and Cæsar shall forth.

Kath. Fie, fie; unknit that unkind threatening brow, and dart not scornful glances from those eyes—it mars thy beauty as the frost the meads, destroys thy favour as wild winds nip fair buds, and in no sense is meet or honourable.

Cæs. Et tu, Brute.

Exit arm in arm.

Enter GHOST, with fire, followed by MACBETH.

Ghost (*in sepulchral whisper*). My hour is almost come.

Mac. (*terrified*). Speak, if you can. What are you?

Ghost (*keeps same voice all through*). I am thy father's spirit, doomed for a certain time to walk this earth.

Mac. If it were done, if it is to be done, then t'were better it were done quickly.

Ghost. I could a tale unfold whose lightest word would harrow up thy spirit.

Mac. I dare do all that may become a man: who dares do more, is none. I do fear thy nature; 'tis too full of the milk of human kindness.

Ghost. Oh, wicked wit, and gifts that have the power thus to seduce—Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing to what I shall unfold. (*Threatens with dagger.*)

Mac. By the pricking of my thumbs, something wicked this way comes.

Ghost. Adieu, adieu, remember me.

Mac. Come on, Macduff—What's done cannot be undone.

Ghost. Swear.

Mac. We've *scotched* the snake, not *kilt* it.

Ghost. Swear.

Mac. There's been enough blood shed already.

Ghost. Swear.

Mac. Come ye to the banquet, there's knocking at the gate—come ye to the banquet.

(*Lights turned on again.*) Exit GHOST.

(Enter MRS. PAGE. MACBETH bows to her, and gives MRS. PAGE a letter.)

(Exit MACBETH.)

Mrs. Page. What! Have I 'scaped love letters in the holiday time of my beauty, and am I now a subject for them? Let me see! (*Reads.*) "Ask me no reason why I love you; for though love use reason for his physician he admits him not for his counsellor. You are not young, no more am I; go to, then, there's sympathy; you are merry, so am I; ha! ha! ha! then there's more sympathy; you love sack, and so do I. Would you desire better sympathy? Let it suffice thee, Mistress Page (if the love of a soldier can suffice), that I love thee.—JOHN FALSTAFF." Oh! the idiot. (*Laughter.*)

Enter MRS. FORD, singing "Oh, mistress mine, where are you roaming."

Mrs. Ford. Oh, Mistress Page, give me some counsel!

Mrs. Page. Why what's the matter, woman?

Mrs. Ford. Oh, if it were not for one trifling respect, I could come to such honour!

Mrs. Page. Hang the trifle, woman, take the honour. What is it—dis-
pense with trifles; what is it?

Mrs. Ford. If I would go to hell for one eternal minute, I could be knighted.

Mrs. Page. What? Thou liest! Sir Alice Ford!

Mrs. Ford. Nay, read—(*They compare letters.*)—How shall I be avenged on him? Did you ever hear the like?

Mrs. Page. 'Tis the very same—letter for letter—but that the name of Page and Ford differs. If he comes under my hatches, he'll never to sea again.

Mrs. Ford. Oh, that my husband saw this letter, it would give eternal food for his jealousy.

Mrs. Page. Here comes Sir John Falstaff.

Enter SIR JOHN. MRS. PAGE and MRS. FORD join hands and begin to sing "Sigh no more, ladies." Enter back all previous performers. At "then sigh not so" all female characters join hands and walk round SIR JOHN singing chorus—break for second verse, then repeat—at "converting all your sounds of woe," walk round the other way. At end of last chorus, each female character is joined by her companion (JULIET by ROMEO, etc.), and form in half circle, SIR JOHN in centre, with MRS. PAGE and MRS. FORD on each side; HAMLET, GHOST, MACBETH, SHYLOCK, KING LEAR at two ends. Then MRS. PAGE steps forward and says:

Now, all together, this motley host,
Hope that their "Winter's Tale" is not "Love's Labour Lost!"

CURTAIN.

For a small number of actors, some of these characters might easily be omitted. Miss Allen, Oak Cottage, Timperley, will be glad to add details of costumes or by play used, which might be useful.

SCALE HOW.